In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Cujba (Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh), said that in 1973, Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had set quotas for the number of women in civil service. Since his assassination in 1975, however, that policy had been ignored until its reinstatement by his daughter, current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. At present, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Leader of the House, five ministers and the leader of the Opposition were women. Of the 345 seats in Parliament, 45 were reserved for women and at present, there were 64 women parliamentarians. There were women Supreme Court judges, permanent secretaries and senior officers in the police and the military. The Constitution guaranteed women's equality within a broad framework of democracy and non-discrimination on grounds of religion, race or gender and the Government was determined to overcome bigoted obscurantism and to secure equal rights and opportunities for women.

2. His Government endorsed the outcome documents of the relevant international conferences and had taken steps to meet its international obligations in the area of gender equality. It had adopted a National Policy for Women's Advancement and a related Plan of Action. Policies for the empowerment of women were monitored by the Women's Development Implementation Committee, headed by the Minister for Women and Children Affairs. Gender-responsive budgeting had been introduced for the 2011 fiscal year and development planning took gender issues into account. A Female Formed Police Unit, deployed to Haiti in May 2009, was proof that the women of his country participated in conflict resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation as mandated in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

3. The primary and secondary school enrolment rates were higher for girls than for boys; at the secondary school level, girls received tuition waivers and stipends. Since 2008, domestic violence legislation had been adopted and the women of Bangladesh had been permitted to transmit their nationality to their children. The Government provided microcredit and product display centres for women and hired more women than men for rural public works projects. The Vulnerable Group Development Programme provided skill training and loans for simple capital machinery such as sewing machines — so that women could set up their own enterprises. Older and poor women were eligible for allowances and shelter and working women for dormitories and day care centres; the latter efforts, however, needed to be scaled up.

4. The economic downturn and climate change had further threatened the already insufficient resources allocated to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) while raising the level of need. He urged the developed countries to make their promised contribution of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI), including 0.2 per cent for the least developed countries.

5. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that his delegation welcomed the establishment of the Women's Empowerment Principles under the United Nations Global Compact; the recommendations made in the resolution on women's economic empowerment, adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, of which Chile had been a sponsor; and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/289, which had established a composite United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women. He hoped that the new entity would soon be operational and would receive sustainable funding.

6. During its bicentennial year, Chile reaffirmed its commitment to implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. The President had made it a priority to overcome the adverse effects of the February earthquake, eliminate poverty, ensure equality of opportunity and achieve developed country status by the end of the current decade. Accordingly, the National Women's Service (SERNAM) would focus during the period 2010-2014 on achieving the goal of gender parity in the workforce by removing obstacles to women's entry into the labour market and creating new jobs. An emergency reconstruction programme entitled "Women, Let Us Lift Chile" and a Presidential Advisory Commission on Women, Work and Motherhood had been established in April. The Commission included experts and representatives of trade unions and the business

community. Its goals were to ensure optimum care for children, make the costs of motherhood irrelevant to women's recruitment and make it easier for women and men to combine work and family life. To that end, the Government planned to promote modernization of the existing labour legislation.

7. The country's gender-based pension system recognized the contribution of domestic work and motherhood and entitled all Chilean women, including those who had not performed paid work, to a pension and to an additional bonus for each child. The Programme for Women Heads of Household provided after-school care to the children of working mothers and another programme, Chile is Growing with You, provided a childcare network that allowed low-income women to pursue an education or enter the labour market.

8. Steps had been taken to decrease the incidence and increase the reporting of domestic violence. Recent draft legislation on femicide had been given urgent attention and a request for the inclusion of protection measures for the victims of domestic violence had been made. Chile was the first Latin American country to have adopted a plan of action to implement resolution 1325 (2000); the plan included cross-cutting measures designed to protect women and children in armed conflicts and to encourage women to participate in post-conflict peacebuilding and in the restoration of democracy. His Government had high maternal and child health standards and was concerned to note that Goals 4 and 5 of the MDGs were the furthest from achievement.

9. **Ms. Kaur** (India), said that in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015, it was important to ensure that the global economic recovery was balanced and sustainable and to make firm, time-bound commitments for, inter alia, the provision of resources, transfer of technology and capacity-building. It was also important to focus on medium- and long-term structural issues of global governance, to complete the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, to expand the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council in order to reflect contemporary realities, and to target women in particular so that they could become equal beneficiaries of development gains. He therefore welcomed the establishment of UN Women to provide leadership and mainstream women's issues in the United Nations and hoped that it would soon be operational.

10. India's National Policy for the Empowerment of Women sought to enhance women's economic and political empowerment and give them equal access to health care, education and employment. Nearly half of the 46 million rural households benefiting from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes, one of the world's largest cash-for-work programmes, were women and there were over 2 million women's self-help groups under the Swarnjayanti Gram Rozgar Yojna rural empowerment programme. Saakshar Bharat was a literacy programme targeting 60 million adult women and the new Right to Education Act made education free and compulsory for all children aged 6 to 14 while focusing on girls. Efforts to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rates, which remained unacceptably high, included the Janani Suraksha Yojna cash assistance programme. Other sources of concern were the low ratio of girls to boys in the country, the gender disparity in literacy and employment rates, high maternal and infant mortality rates, and the problem of violence against women.

11. There had been a perceptible improvement in Indian women's social and economic status, but enormous challenges remained to be overcome. Women were participating in greater numbers in the political process and in decision-making structures; the President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the leader of the ruling coalition and over a million elected members of local governments were women. For over 17 years, one third of the seats on village councils had been reserved for women; that proportion would soon be increased to 50 per cent and there were plans to establish similar quotas for Parliament and the state legislatures.

12. **Mr. Barton** (United States of America) said that the equal empowerment of women and men was essential to social and economic progress. He welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on UN Women and looked forward to the selection of a strong, entrepreneurial leader to guide it.

13. His delegation was honoured to have been asked by Brazil, Moldova and the Netherlands to review their thoughtful, candid and far-sighted national voluntary presentations; at the same time, he appreciated the interest in his own country's voluntary presentation and the constructive reviews conducted by Bangladesh, Demark and United Republic of Tanzania. He had also enjoyed the special policy dialogue on the role of women in countries in special situations and had been

pleased to hear the ministers of various countries share their national experiences in mobilizing popular support for gender equality at various forums.

14. His delegation applauded efforts to increase the enrolment rate for girls, promote safe childbirth, reduce trafficking, assist women farmers and increase women's economic independence; the United States welcomed the innovations introduced and experiments conducted throughout the world and was supporting and investing in some of them. Women played a catalytic role in guiding and uniting donor and partner countries' efforts to achieve the MDGs, and there was universal agreement on the need for a holistic approach in which gender equality and women's empowerment were incorporated into each of the Goals.

15. Nearly two thirds of the developing countries had met the goal of eliminating gender disparity in education and the goal of achieving parity in secondary education by 2015 was within reach. Development gains of such magnitude were extraordinary and should be built upon. However, the infant and maternal mortality and child undernutrition rates remained high and women and girls accounted for the majority of the world's poor. They were unschooled, unhealthy and underfed; did most of the work on farms; lacked access to adequate resources, support and training; and were unable to enjoy their rights.

16. His Government's efforts to incorporate gender concerns into its national programmes by driving innovation, investing in sustainability, tracking and evaluating outcomes and reinforcing mutual accountability were illustrated by its US$ 3.5 billion Feed the Future initiative and its US$ 63 billion Global Health Initiative, both of which had been described in his delegation's national voluntary presentation. Those and other initiatives would bring achievement of the MDGs closer to reality.

17. The tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) would provide an opportunity for Member States to renew their commitment to letting women's voice be heard during conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. And since gender-based violence was not limited to conflict situations and occurred in every country, it was necessary to change cultural attitudes that accepted violence against women. His Government would continue to support programmes aimed at combating such violence and would work with governments and at the grass-roots level to protect the victims and improve accountability and prevention.

18. **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq) said that his country had been one of the first in the region to address issues of women's rights. Indeed, the women's movement in Iraq had coincided with the establishment of the modern State in 1921. Labour Act No. 72 of 1936 had made important advances for working women by giving them equality with men. In 1959, a ministerial portfolio had been given to a woman, who had become a symbol of women's participation in leadership roles.

19. Since 2003, within the framework of democracy, institutions had been established giving women the opportunity to participate in decision-making. The 2005 Constitution focused on a number of important rights, including equality and non-discrimination, equal opportunities, the right to citizenship for the child of an Iraqi mother or father, and the right to participate in public affairs. It also contained a quota for women in the house of representatives. At present, three ministers and two ministers of State were women. Women were also represented in many leadership posts and as experts, counsellors and under-secretaries.

20. Terrorism in the country had left tens of thousands of orphans and widows, which increased the burden on women to support their families. Nonetheless, there had been many positive developments with regard to women's rights. Institutions had been established to care for women and their families, including a Ministry of State and a Parliamentary Commission. There were also many non-governmental organizations in the country working with women and children. The Government had adopted new policies to promote women's affairs and created a community police force to care for female victims of violence. It also granted microcredits to women so they could improve their situation.

21. Iraq respected the role of women and supported their right to work. Such progress was important in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

22. **Ms. Blum** (Observer for Colombia), referring to certain areas that were essential to empower women and ensure their equality, said that the full access of girls and women to education was the first basic requirement. Her own country, having achieved universal coverage in basic education, was now working on expanding secondary education coverage and improving the quality of education which would

eventually include the teaching of equal rights and duties of men and women and training in sexual and reproductive health.

23. Economic empowerment was a second prerequisite for giving women autonomy. Without it, there would be no equality of rights or sustainable development and poverty would not be eradicated. Accordingly, her Government had improved job training and entrepreneurship opportunities for women, and their access to microcredit. It was implementing the Rural Women's Act and an equal employment agenda in cooperation with major business associations. Colombia's action against extreme poverty and its family subsidies had also had an impact. The United Nations as well must continue working to improve the legal and social status of women.

24. A third area was the protection of women against violence. The current Administration, having successfully reduced crime throughout the country, had through its Gender Equality Office given women specific tools for dealing with gender-based violence, while the Congress had passed stronger laws against trafficking in persons and domestic violence and adopted a new comprehensive law on violence against women. It simply supported UNiTE to End Violence against Women, the Secretary-General's campaign, and welcomed the establishment of its database.

25. Priority must also be given to the participation of women in politics. Recent legislation in Colombia had helped bring more women into the executive and legislative branches, although there was room for further improvement.

26. National efforts to achieve gender equality and to empower women needed international support. Colombia welcomed the reform of the General Assembly's gender architecture, and hoped that the new gender entity would be given sufficient political, financial and technical capacity.

27. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) observed that promoting gender equality was an important element in Zambia's development strategy. The new national development plan that would soon come into effect systematically mainstreamed gender into all sectors. Government bureaux had been given more funds for the economic empowerment of women and Zambia's special economic empowerment fund, gave women preferential treatment.

28. Her Government was also committed to giving women more access to productive resources, such as land, affordable credit, agricultural extension services and appropriate technology; and had also joined forces with the country's financial institutions in addressing some of the hurdles that women entrepreneurs faced. After sectoral surveys, recommendations had been made for advancing women's economic equality in the land and agriculture sectors through the establishment of public institutions like gender focal points throughout the country and at the district level to administer programmes for rural women. In the allocation of titled land, one third was specifically reserved for women as part of the recent land reform.

29. While Zambia had made steady progress in the achievement of the MDG targets, gender-based violence and the feminization of HIV/AIDS still remained major concerns. In the area of education, readmission and scholarship policies made it easier for girls to remain in school and go on to higher education. A gender-mainstreaming strategy within the Government's four-year public service reform programme would increase the political representation of women. At the same time, civil society organizations had been providing training in leadership skills and financial support for women candidates for office.

30. **Mr. Okuda** (Japan), while welcoming the establishment of the new gender entity within the United Nations and the Council's focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which were prerequisites for the achievement of all the other Millennium Development Goals, said that further international efforts were needed to bolster action taken by individual Governments.

31. Japan had been resolutely promoting the concept of human security as a pillar of its diplomatic policy, focusing on both the individual and the community and on the protection of the vulnerable, and making gender equality and empowerment of women crucial elements of the policy. Since its 2005 gender development initiative, his Government had been doing everything in its power to mainstream gender into every area and into every phase of its official development assistance (ODA), thus contributing directly to the equality and empowerment of women around the world. Japan was, for example, successfully cooperating with the Government of Yemen to develop the education of girls in that country and had set up a fund within the United Nations to finance a number of projects for women in

precarious situations, such as the one providing comprehensive health, education and financial assistance to women and girls caught in the midst of armed conflict in Nepal. It would also continue to fund maternal and child health care and assist victims of human trafficking.

32. In Japan itself, the participation of women in politics remained quite low, but recent elections had been encouraging and it was making slow but steady progress in that area. Another of its top priorities was to eliminate gender disparities in wages, provide assistance to working women, set rules prohibiting long working hours and establish a proper work-life balance in the family. Its third gender equality plan was due for approval later in the year.

33. As Chair of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Japan would be convening meetings of the networks for women leaders and gender focal points and, with the United States, would host the APEC women's entrepreneurship summit, all of them opportunities to enhance the economic empowerment of women and increase awareness of the economic potential of women.

34. **Mr. Escalona Ojeda** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), observing that his Government sought to build a new model of society based on humanitarian values and the radical transformation of the means of production for the general good, said that his Republic was unique in not having cut its social expenditures despite the recession and disregarding International Monetary Fund (IMF) strictures, in successfully forging its own path towards fulfilment of the MDGs, in order to overcome poverty and inequality.

35. With respect to women, that meant guaranteeing human rights and gender equality and recognizing the full value of women's contributions. A body of legislation — such as the equal opportunity law and the law on violence against women — guaranteed the rights of women in non-sexist and non-discriminatory language, as mandated by the Constitution. Venezuela was a party to the major international and regional instruments relating to women. Among the public programmes on behalf of women, there were shelters for victims of violence, special grants to compensate women for the unrecognized work they did in the home, and a women's development bank that offered easily accessible microcredit to poor women. A people's ministry for women and gender equality with branches throughout the country allowed women to make proposals and discuss their needs collectively.

36. Venezuela also provided free education at all levels on an equal basis to women and men. It had achieved not only gender equality but a higher attendance of women in both primary and secondary education, and the proportion of women in higher education had been steadily increasing. Women's access to high-level political posts had also increased, with women at the helm of four out of five of the major branches of government.

37. **Ms. Nwadinobi** (Observer for Nigeria) said that her Government, aware of the centrality of women to a healthy, stable and prosperous society, had charged the National Agency for Poverty Eradication and similar bodies to pay particular attention to gender equity issues and devise mechanisms responsive to the needs and interests of women. As a result, there had been a marked increase in national strategies to bolster the competitive edge of women, help them become entrepreneurs and involve them more deeply in decision-making. Since 2005, the Government had allocated an additional 5 per cent of the budget to gender issues; and at all levels of government, capacity-building and gender-mainstreaming projects had been set up for women.

38. In the area of education, the efforts to bridge the equality gap were pronounced: the ratio of girls to boys in primary education had continued to rise and female as well as male enrolment at the secondary and higher levels was increasing. Many states of the Nigerian Federation had made school attendance mandatory for all children. In other areas, the proportion of women in public office still fell short of the 30 per cent target, but that of women in non-agricultural paid employment, especially in a decision-making capacity, had continued to improve, thus giving hope of a corresponding improvement in the legislature. Nigeria was also implementing strategies to prevent the pandemics whose burden weighed heaviest on women.

39. Among the development issues that affected women in particular, Governments should put emphasis on funding agricultural development, improving the economic infrastructure, boosting market access, providing more technical assistance and capacity-building, improving outreach to rural women, combating disease, lessening the impact of climate change, scaling up ODA to developing countries and

extending more debt-relief packages to poorer countries.

40. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines), urged the Council, the United Nations and each Member State to take the difficult decisions to move the recent deliberations beyond mere rhetoric. The new Administration in his country, coinciding with the next phase of the medium-term development plan, a national strategy anchored in the MDGs, would pursue their fulfilment with renewed vigour. The recent passage of the Philippine Magna Carta of Women in 2009 had put into one comprehensive law the provisions governing the role that women played in nation-building; it sought to eliminate discrimination against them, in the political, economic, sociocultural, and private domestic spheres; it protected them against violence; and ensured mandatory training in human rights and gender sensitivity for all Government agents in the field.

41. The President had already appointed four women to key ministerial positions in his cabinet — justice, labour and employment, social welfare and development, and the peace process — thus underscoring that there could be no sustainable development without peace, justice and decent jobs for all and that women were in the best position to understand problems in those areas and develop the policies needed.

42. The five themes of the Development Cooperation Forum were also congruent with Philippine interests in a time of declining ODA, which in any case was only one approach to development financing. The Philippines joined the call for a greater role for the Forum in the future.

43. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) said that, having amply explained his country's policies and programmes during a recent national voluntary presentation, he now wished to make a few specific points on the theme under consideration.

44. First, the World Economic and Social Survey 2010: *Retooling Global Development* (E/2010/50) provided exactly the conceptual framework needed for rethinking the future course of development action at a time of such fundamental uncertainty and crisis.

45. Secondly, the Council's discussions on gender equality and empowerment of women were an important preparatory exercise for the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (the MDG Summit) that would be held in September; and an exercise that had to do with all the Goals, since poverty and hunger, education and health and the environmental dimension were all intimately linked to the advancement of women. Taking responsibility for achieving the Goals conferred the moral authority to insist on the conditions conducive to their fulfilment.

46. Thirdly, Guatemala joined others in welcoming the establishment of a single gender entity that made the United Nations system more coherent and at the same time put a spotlight on gender equality and empowerment of women in the United Nations agenda.

47. Lastly, the importance of the Council's work required both traditional and new ways of realizing its potential, and the innovative efforts that had been in evidence in recent days were therefore most welcome.

48. **Ms. Mucdin** (Observer, International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that migration could be an important variable in the achievement of gender equality and development. The Beijing Declaration had recognized that poverty compelled many women to migrate in order to provide for their families and that their migration had consequences. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had dealt with the dual discrimination faced by migrant women in its general recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers and insisted on respect for their human rights as a factor enabling them to contribute to development. It was now acknowledged also that migration could have important ramifications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, either as a catalyst for development or as a further challenge to it. The migration of health professionals, for instance, was detrimental to women's access to care, especially in the areas of reproductive health, maternal health and the treatment of HIV/AIDS; on the other hand, the billions of dollars in remittances returned to the migrants' families in developing countries provided invaluable help in terms of poverty alleviation, education — especially for girls — and reduction in child mortality.

49. Safe and legal migration, moreover, served to empower women by giving them employment opportunities unavailable at home, thus fostering financial autonomy, a better social status as breadwinner, and decision-making power. The improved status of migrant women was also an opportunity for them to take on non-traditional roles.

50. There was a growing recognition of the role migrants played as agents of development, through their transnational philanthropic activities but also their

involvement in defining the host countries' development policies — in essence creating a partnership for development that brought together migrants and countries of origin and destination in the spirit of Goal 8. The international community should invest more in women's leadership either locally or in the diaspora in order to facilitate their participation in that global partnership.

51. Consideration of gender and migration issues should be systematically included in the discussions at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in September.

52. **Mr. Kalyoncu** (Observer, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)), noting that securing peace and progress in a society and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, required the active participation of women, who nevertheless faced overwhelming challenges. Despite the priority given to the rights of women in the international community's agenda, many were still deprived of basic rights and subjected to various forms of violence and discrimination.

53. Violence against women was a shameful crime and must be dealt with by appropriate legislation in all societies. Unfortunately, women were still viewed as secondary beings by many, including some of the self-appointed defenders of women's rights. Such thinking had ancient historical roots. His organization believed that there could be no true humanity without unity between women and men as meaningful parts of a whole.

54. Islam, as a religion of peace and equality, had pioneered the protection of the rights of women: it had stood for their right to education, equal treatment and participation in decision-making as equal partners in society, while at the same time rejecting all forms of violence against them.

55. OIC worked in coordination with the United Nations and other international stakeholders in order to empower women. Its Ten-Year Programme of Action emphasized the advancement of women in Muslim societies in the economic, cultural, social and political fields and called upon member States to revise their respective laws accordingly. Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women stressed gender equality, the empowerment of women and their political, social and economic participation as central to the eradication of poverty and to sustainable development; the desirability of their participation in decision-making at all levels; and the critical role of education in eliminating gender inequality and providing women with socio-economic and political opportunities. In 2008, OIC had launched, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a businesswomen's information network in the OIC countries, and had established the OIC Women's Centre in Cairo to spearhead their active participation in every aspect of life in the OIC member States.

56. **Mr. Jilani** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)), said that the Federation's annual World Disasters Report, to be launched later in the year, focused on the urbanization of disasters as a twenty-first century challenge. According to the report, climate change would likely increase the links between urban poverty and disaster risk, and the people and nations least responsible for global warming would face the greatest risks. With strong volunteer support, IFRC was working with city leaders and civil society worldwide to address urban challenges by tackling root causes.

57. IFRC and its member National Societies were increasingly focusing on integrating a gender perspective into its policy framework and operational activities. In Haiti, for example, priority was being given to women's access to health services, including reproductive health; the role of women in agriculture and food security; ensuring land and house tenure and equal employment opportunities and equal pay for women in its operations; and prioritizing single female- and parent-headed households during relief distribution. It had also appointed a delegate to deal with gender-based violence in Haiti, and combating violence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse was an integral part of its plan of action.

58. The impact of the global financial crisis and the economic uncertainty on humanitarian and development assistance remained a major concern. Funding for humanitarian aid was failing to keep pace with the growing humanitarian need, and too little was being spent on risk preparedness and reduction and attempts to reduce vulnerabilities.

59. **Ms. DeFrantz** (Observer, International Olympic Committee (IOC)), said that implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of

women was a matter of survival, and the issue of women in sport was directly related to human and social rights. The Olympic Charter stated that every human being must have the possibility of practising sport in accordance with his or her needs, and the United Nations and other international organizations had recognized explicitly that the principle of non-discrimination encompassed the right of all women and girls to engage in sport and physical and recreational activity on an equal basis with men and boys. The International Olympic Committee hoped that the contribution of sport and physical activity would again be recognized and included in the outcome document of the high-level segment.

60. IOC was committed to achieving gender parity: more than 40 per cent of competitors at the Olympic Games were women, and with the addition of women's boxing to the programme of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, women would be competing in every sport at the Summer Games. The IOC Women and Sport Commission provided technical and financial assistance for community-based programmes and skills development, and IOC partnerships with United Nations agencies and programmes, including the United Nations Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, had yielded positive results. While women's access to sporting and recreation was improving, IOC was committed to making progress towards bridging the gap that remained in their access to sport administration and leadership roles.

61. **Mr. Mpotogomyi** (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) called for careful consideration and resolute action to address the major gap that still existed in women's politics and governance, which, despite recent progress, still fell far short of the 30 per cent target set in Beijing 15 years ago. Urgent action was needed, particularly in view of the current context of crises, which left women vulnerable and challenged their development.

62. Earlier in the year, IPU had concluded a study on women in parliament, and had produced, with the help of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, a new edition of the world map on women in politics, which revealed that the world average of women in parliament stood at 19 per cent, up from 11.3 per cent in 1995. Nonetheless, progress had been slow; at the current annual growth rate, the 30 per cent target would not be reached until 2025.

63. Much remained to be done to eliminate discrimination against women, particularly through the institution of quotas and other temporary special measures, the reform of political party selection and recruitment, the elimination of gender stereotypes and violence against women, and the organization of waging systematic, far-reaching awareness campaigns. IPU was focusing on helping parliaments to build a gender-sensitive national legal framework; promote maternal, newborn and child health; and adopt effective national legislation to combat violence against women. It also encouraged them to allocate sufficient resources to those ends.

64. **Mr. Marzano** (International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (IAESCSI)), said that, at a time of crisis, vigorous, global action was needed to ensure that gender equality objectives were met. Such action must be taken by Governments of developed and developing countries alike, by labour and management trough social dialogue and collective bargaining, and by civil society. In industrialized countries, reconciling professional and family life and addressing the salary gap went hand in hand with women's empowerment in the workforce, institutions and society. Developing countries needed to boost education, health and economic activity indicators for women. IAESCSI had adopted gender equality strategy guidelines which focused primarily on sectoral policies in areas where serious inequalities existed, including to education, health, employment and economic activity, migration, fighting violence against women and women's place in society in general. Civil society had a considerable role to play in that regard, and economic and social councils were the ideal forum for monitoring the improvement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

65. **Mr. Ratsifandrihamanana** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), presenting a joint statement of the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), said that a record 1 billion people had been chronically hungry in 2009, with women accounting for more than half of those affected. While women produced half of the world's food and were often the majority of the agricultural workforce, they faced persistent sociocultural and political inequalities and were routinely denied access to productive assets such as

land, water, credit and technology. Following the global food crisis of 2007-2008, the international community had increasingly come to recognize that the achievement of the MDGs depended significantly on improving food security and agricultural and rural development; however, renewed commitments to that end had yet to translate into action.

66. Gender equality and the empowerment of women were a vital component of the work of the Rome-based agencies. FAO, IFAD and WFP initiatives included enhancing women's access to income-earning opportunities and productive assets, improving rural women's access to basic services and infrastructure, strengthening women producers' organizations, providing food assistance in times of crisis and recognizing rural women and men as key stakeholders and powerful actors of change. They also believed that dialoguing with civil society was integral to "getting it right", for example, the FAO Committee on World Food Security gave multi-stakeholders, including women a say in its decision-making process.

67. The Rome-based agencies welcomed the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative — a sign that world leaders had shown a renewed interest in sustainable development and food security investments — and encouraged the international community to take action aimed at increasing investment in food security, agriculture and rural development; promoting productive and social safety nets and eliminating gender imbalances in access to them; implementing effective food security and poverty reduction strategies; strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships and global governance of food security; and improving agriculture, food security and nutrition policies. They called on Member States and the United Nations system to direct attention to gender equality and the role of women in agriculture at forthcoming events, and at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in September.

68. **Ms. Gastaldo** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the International Labour Conference Resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, unanimously adopted in June 2009, was the Organization's most comprehensive contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It called on ILO to promote women's equality as a cross-cutting issue in the strategic objectives of its Recent Work Agenda, namely employment, social protection, principles and rights at work, and social dialogue. The resolution also highlighted the role that Governments and employers' and workers' organizations had to play in achieving greater gender equality in the world of work, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable women in society, including indigenous, migrant, minority, young and rural women.

69. Moreover, its Global Jobs Pact, also adopted in 2009, was designed to guide national and international policies aimed at stimulating economic recovery, generating jobs and providing protection to working people and their families, and recognized the need for recovery packages to take into account the differing impacts of the economic crisis on men and women. ILO had plans to set new international labour standards on the issue of decent work for domestic workers and address the vulnerability of women and girls to verbal, physical and sexual violence in that context, adding power to Government efforts in that regard.

70. **Ms. Sarlis** (International Alliance of Women) said that Governments and the relevant intergovernmental organizations should develop national rosters of potential women candidates and ensure that women were fully informed about, and encouraged to apply for, positions in the area of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, particularly in senior management. The Alliance also recommended that Government policies on protection in conflict and post-conflict situations should take account of the important role and particular needs of women in girls; that health care, including maternal and mental health care, should be provided to women and girls in post-conflict situations; and that the reconciliation process should protect women's rights. Equally vital were the establishment of accessible and transparent early warning systems with an integrated gender perspective and the financing and empowerment of women's organizations to ensure their participation in building sustainable peace. Cooperation between women's organizations working to achieve sustainable peace in conflict and post-conflict situations and leading political stakeholders should always take place within a political — not a military framework.

71. **Ms. Lear** (HelpAge International) said that there had been a profound demographic change with regard to age and the policies needed to respond to it. Ageing was a women's issue because women accounted for the majority of older people or those who took care them,

and because they were often the victims of ageism and sexism combined. She appealed to Council members and observers and NGO colleagues to occasionally use the phrase "girls and women of all ages" in their reports, statements and speeches.

72. HelpAge International recommended that gender and ageing should be embedded in all aspects of the work of the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); the ageing and its gender aspects should be central to the review of the Millennium Development Goals; that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should systematically question reporting States parties on the situation of elderly women; and that gender equality should be a key aspect of national 10-reviews of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

73. **Ms. Karmakar** (International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation) said that financial independence should be an integral part of education for boys and girls starting at the elementary level. In less developed countries, girls tended not to attend school or dropped out. A one-day family planning training course should be mandatory prior to marriage registration in those countries, focusing, inter alia, on the cost of raising children. Girls should be taught that sexual abuse was a crime, and all girls should learn a trade and be adequately compensated for their work; women should be able to count on men to share in family responsibilities.

74. With regard to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), transparency was crucial. Countries should be required to submit annual MDG progress reports to the United Nations, and the relevant data should be verifiable by a third party to enable other nations to duplicate successful measures or avoid failures. In addition, one high-level Government official should be responsible for coordinating and tracking all MDG-related activities, and that person's contact information should be available to the public.

75. **Ms. Sakoh** (World Society for the Protection of Animals) said that animal welfare and the empowerment of rural women of all ages were linked. In developing countries, women were often responsible for the care of farm animals, which provided crucial nutrition for their families and communities, and excess farm animal produce was a major source of income for families. Animals were also relied on for transporting water, food and goods. Preserving and developing traditional extensive farming systems through training and capacity-building in animal welfare practices and veterinary care thus had a direct and positive impact on women's empowerment.

76. For rural women, animals were an investment and a social safety net. Women knew that it would be more difficult to educate their children or obtain proper health care if their animals were sick or, worse still, if they died. Consequently, the international community should take animal welfare into consideration in the development and implementation of national and international policies aimed at achieving the MDGs.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.